



Grau d'Estudis Anglesos

Treball de Fi de Grau

Curs 2020-2021

TÍTOL:

ELF in the Catalan education and workplace

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Barcelona, 15 de juny de 2021



I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor Maria Luz Celaya for her helpful and constructive suggestions through the development of this project.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my parents and friends for their patience. Lastly, I could not have completed this research work without the support of my partner.

Thank you.



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Abstract

The world has been more globalised in recent years, and as a result, English has come to play a larger role in global relations, becoming a language for communication in a variety of fields and displacing other important languages such as French or German. This widespread use of English has elevated it to the status of a Lingua Franca, allowing people to communicate with others who do not share their first language. Despite that, English is not commonly taught as a Lingua Franca in Spain. This study explores the place and use of ELF in the Catalan education and workplace and demonstrates through the review of the literature and the results of the questionnaire that English is not taught as a medium for communication in the region and this could affect the Catalan society to achieve successful communication in any situation.

Keywords: ELF, education, workplace communication, English, Catalonia

Síntesis

El mundo se ha globalizado mucho en los últimos años y, como consecuencia, el inglés ha pasado a desempeñar un papel muy importante en las relaciones globales, convirtiéndose en la lengua de comunicación en diversos ámbitos y con ello, dejando atrás otras lenguas importantes como el francés o el alemán. Esta expansión del inglés por todo el mundo lo ha elevado a la categoría de Lengua Franca, permitiendo a las personas comunicarse con otras que no comparten su lengua materna. A pesar de ello, el inglés no se enseña habitualmente como Lengua Franca en España. En este estudio se explora el rol y uso de ELF en el mundo catalán de la educación y el trabajo y se demuestra, a través de la reseña bibliográfica y los resultados del cuestionario, que el inglés no se enseña como medio de comunicación en la región y que esto podría afectar a la sociedad catalana a lograr una comunicación efectiva en cualquier situación.

Palabras clave: ELF, educación, comunicación en el trabajo, Inglés, Cataluña

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1 INTRODUCTION

During the last few years, English has achieved the status of one of the most commonly spoken languages in the world. As Cenoz (2019, p. 72) claims “due to the spread of English all over the world, the use of English very often involves non-native speakers. The more English becomes ‘everybody’s’ language, the more it dissociates itself from English as a native language. This brings into question the ownership of English and the reference to native norms”. The fact that English is used for a large number of citizens who are non-native speakers of it, leads English to become a language for communication or what is also called a *Lingua Franca* in a variety of contexts, as opposed to the common view of English as a foreign language in countries where it is not an official one. This specific use of English could be applied to different settings such as the educational field or the workplace area.

Regarding the Catalan education, nowadays, the students are expected to learn English throughout their school days. In this context, learners and educators need to interact between them despite their profile differences regarding the level of English. This fact is what causes that the English used in these situations is different from the native or normative form of the language due to the employment of this language as a *Lingua Franca*.

At the same time, the workplace is another context to take into account in the use of ELF in Catalonia. The fact that English has become an instrument for every worker not only to prosper in their job but also to communicate, leads to the important growth of the language. According to Kuteeva (2013), Björkman (2011, 2013) and Tange (2010) studies, this is what produce that “academic workplaces are undergoing a process of internationalization and globalization, creating an increased need for English-medium education, and entailing the adoption of English as a communicative *lingua franca* (ELF).”

The aim of the present study is based on the investigation of the English as a *Lingua Franca* role as a tool for communication in the world of education and workplace in Catalonia. An experiment to Catalan students and workers will be made with the purpose to acquire a real perspective of the English function in the region and the importance of ELF in the focused areas. Furthermore, the research will also concentrate on features associated with the characteristics of ELF, EFL and the definition of CLIL.

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction to the review of the literature

It is widely known that, during the last years, English has become one of the most predominant languages in the world due to its use in the financial area together with the technological and cultural spheres. In addition, it is, significantly, the foreign language most chosen to study in the whole world leaving behind other languages such as French or German. As Crystal (2012, p. 74) states in one of his articles, “of all modern languages, not one has acquired such great strength and vigor as the English [...] it may be called justly a language of the world, destined to reign in future with still more extensive sway over all parts of the globe”. With it, shows the importance and increase of English use in communication among speakers who have different and complex backdrops in terms of culture and language. This spread of English is what drives it into the position of a *Lingua Franca*, a concept that is related with two different viewpoints as it will be described in the next section.

2.2. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

In the first place, English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) is considered, as Firth (1996, p. 240) declares, a “contact language”, a variety of English, that is used for speakers in order to converse. At the same time, ELF is reflected as a language used as a medium of communication between non-native speakers of this language who do not share the same mother tongue. In this present study, the research will be focused on the latter definition in which the speakers use English for *lingua franca* purposes (Ur, 2010, p. 1). With the aim to complete this definition it is essential to take into account that ELF has a variety of communication common features that has been studied and recognised during the last few years. As is mentioned in Mauraanen (2010), the more basic characteristics of ELF have to do not only with lexis and grammar but also with pronunciation and speaking. To exemplify, negotiating topics that highlighted the subject by bringing it forward, but also self-rephrasing or the repetition of words, are related to ELF and both are introduced in a conversation in order to become clearer and help the interlocutor. In like manner, the application of grammatical deviations of Standard English through the introduction of articles and prepositions not necessary in the context, either the use of metadiscourse characterises ELF. This use of the emphatically explicit communication strategies stated above are the most important features found through corpus research.

In order to deal with ELF, it is important to realise the difference that this concept has with English as a Foreign Language (EFL). As is defined by Rahimi (2015), EFL “refers to teaching and learning of English in a setting in which English is neither widely used for communication among the nation, nor is it used as the medium of instruction.” With EFL, the teachers applied this method centering on a standard native speaker pattern in which only the native speaker's use of English is the correct one. Otherwise, that is not to say that ELF is the contrary of EFL. As Swan (2012, p. 388) writes, “EFL leads to ELF [...] they are on opposite sides of the same coin, not in competition with one another: the findings of ELF are a component of EFL planning, and one feeds into the other.”

2.2.1. ELF in education

The spread of this language leads Applied Linguistics to demand a reexamination of the language of English not only in the cultural and business areas but also in the world of education (Marlina & Xu, 2018, p. 1-2). According to Sifakis (2009) the fact that this language has acquired a key role in worldwide communication induce educators to take into account ELF in the teaching of English in schools and, become aware of their role as facilitators of language learning, and not only as custodians of “proper” English. The issue of establishing ELF in the language teaching of English needs to start with the teachers and the materials dealt in class considering the essential skills for students to communicate effectively with others. Therefore, focusing the learning of English in the necessity of cross-cultural comprehension instead of in the capacity to acquire the whole norms of the language.

If the teachers decide to introduce the ELF features treated above into the acquisition of English in the educational institutions, they need to give priority to techniques that will help the students to this successful intercultural communication. In this situation, it must be kept in mind that the objective of the adoption of ELF is based on the creation of new ways to interact in a variety of situations with people of different language origins thanks to communicative policies rather than on the substitution of English as a language (Nagy, 2016). Then, ELF will be introduced like a pidgin, “a form of language, reduced in vocabulary, simplified in grammar, and typically containing elements from several languages, which arises for restricted communication functions between speakers of different mother tongues; it is no one's mother tongue.” (Ferguson & Heath, 1981, p. 351). Furthermore, educators will need to concentrate on the way these learners applied the techniques and characteristics proposed rather than on the formal rules of the language. Under those circumstances, the learners will be familiar with the

functions and utilities of English and will be in touch with a variety of tasks that will provide them with experience in the production of English as a language for communication. As claimed by Seildhofer (2003), the real purpose of teaching English is founded on the capacity of learners to become efficient and competent in this language without being a native one and, therefore, turning into a bilingual or multilingual speaker.

Despite this information, it is important to realise that in most cases, teachers decide to decline the idea to introduce ELF features into the acquisition of English in the school as a consequence of the insufficient documentation and tasks (Nagy, 2016, p. 162). Moreover, the obstacles of modifying the teaching techniques and the non-practical instruction approach of ELF is what turns difficult the teaching of English as a language for communication in the school context. Additionally, despite the teachers' acknowledgement of the importance of English in international communication, they do not realise how this language influences their students' future and, hence, the urgency to introduce ELF into EFL teaching (Sifakis & Sougari, 2005).

2.2.2. ELF in the workplace

“The modern workplace is international and multilingual” claims Angouri (2014, p. 1), indeed, with this sentence the author decided to express that, as other fields in society, the world of business has been evolving during the past few years due to globalisation. This fact is what makes that English has been extended and placed in society as a communicative lingua franca (ELF) (Björkman 2011, 2013; Tange 2010). This increase of English in business goes together with a great number of mergers, unions of entities, and business associations. These different business movements lead to the creation of an international network of business professionals who do not use their mother tongue as their working language because English has been transformed into the language that has assisted to “connect the world linguistically” (Galloway, 2015, p. 11). As Negretti and Miguel Garcia-Yeste declare (2015, p. 96) following Angouri & Miglbauer (2013) words, today’s workplace “are clearly a type of context where people from different backgrounds are faced with the need to cooperate and negotiate professional tasks, often requiring them to confront issues of intercultural communication and language practices.” In fact, the introduction of English as the language for communication between workers is what turns these differences into something unimportant. Currently, therefore, English is recognised as one of the languages most used for communication in the workplace.

Additionally, for this reason, a variety of studies about English in business has been done and many of the experts decided to focus more specifically on the use of ELF in business. In a number of these studies, problems in language and communication happened in the business areas which use ELF, have been examined with the aim to expose the importance in the workplace to determine social relationships by way of pragmatic negotiations, informal communication and small talk (Angouri, 2012; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999; Pullin, 2010). Also, as is revealed by the study of Poppi (2012, p.49), English is used as a lingua franca in many of the situations that occur in the workplace with the purpose to, for instance, sell a local service or product in an international commerce. In these circumstances, “is of paramount importance” to give priority to the content of the business offered rather than on the linguistic accuracy.

All things considered, the importance of ELF nowadays is unquestionable, in particular in the area of the workplace.

2.3. Place of English in Catalonia

Catalonia is a region in which Catalan and Spanish are the official languages and are considered the most common for the majority of the community. Moreover, both official languages coexist with English as the main languages spoken and, thus, as it is exposed on the Survey on Language Uses of the Population updated in 2018 (Idescat and the Ministry of Culture under the General Directorate for Language Policy), multilingualism has a major role in the territory. Despite this information provided, only 33.9% of the population could be considered multilingual and the other citizens are deemed as monolingual or as bilingual.

As is also reported by 2018's Survey on Language Uses of the Population, the Catalan community has been increasing their level of English during the last years. Currently, more than 45% of citizens older than 15 years old can understand the language and 41% of them can read it properly. Focusing on writing and speaking skills, a bit more than 36% of the population can be considered capable of writing and speaking in a correct way (Idescat under the General Directorate for Language Policy, Linguistic uses of the population survey, 2013-2018).

That is to say, the fact that English has been expanded through Catalonia in recent years, is not only because of the use of this language in the cultural and business areas, but also due to the reason that, since 2014, English is a requirement to finish the University grade. With this in

mind, the 17.2 % (2018) of the Catalan society that have graduated in any University career since the year provided above, possess a competent level of English. Furthermore, according to the Indicators and Statistics service of the Education Department made in the course of 2019-2020, 22.315 students have been enrolled in English courses with the aim to pass an official exam of this language. Another fact to consider of these statistics is that the Barcelonès province has more registrations in official language exams than the other provinces of the region, specifically 10.601 registrations in which 1934 have to do with English official exams. These numbers evidence that English knowledge is crucial in a place like Barcelona which is considered a global city.

In like manner, English also influences the world of the workplace and takes a great importance in the accessibility of employment opportunities. As is disclosed in Idescat (under the General Directorate for Language Policy, Linguistic uses of the population survey, 2018), 40.8% of the Catalan residents which are considered competent in English and with enough knowledge in all the language skills are active workers in contrast with the 23.1% of the population which are unemployed. This statistic reveals that the level of proficiency in English is correlated with the possibility to acquire a job.

2.3.1. ELF in Catalan education

The Catalan education system (Department of Education, The language model of the Catalan education system, 2018) puts faith in a plurilingual model of schooling in which all the languages taught in the educational institutions need to be introduced to the students with the aim to help their evolution in communicative skills. In detail, the objective is based on aid learners to achieve proficient language knowledge and educate them to use it to perform an efficient conversation in any circumstances.

The general purpose of Catalan teachers is to train scholars to be ready for real life, to be capable of socialising and communicating with all kinds of people and to be prepared for any situation. Additionally, educators try to turn their students skilful in the academic area, giving them methods to be successful in their coming life (Department of Education, The language model of the Catalan education system, 2018). But, still, even though there is a focus on the growth of English in education, the teaching of these language techniques with the purpose to be competent and comfortable using ELF in their future career is not successful enough. According to Reichelt (2006, p. 7), “Students in these and other areas typically have little or

no English language instruction available to them other than what they seek out through private schools or individual tutoring”. Indeed, English is not taught for specific purposes in the Catalan schools, and thus, learners need to acquire this specific way of communication outside the public institutions.

English is not generally introduced as a Lingua Franca in Catalan schools as it can be expressed in The language model of the Catalan education system (2018) although, nowadays, this language is basically used in the region as a medium of competent communication between non-native speakers of English. Hence, English is commonly instructed in a formal setting and with a highlight in form, grammar and vocabulary, as is stated by Firth (2009). At the same time, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is introduced in the acquisition of English as a foreign language. (See subsection 2.3.3.)

2.3.2. ELF in the Catalan workplace

During the past few years, English has taken a major place in the Catalan society building a multilingual region, and this points the way to further research of English in specific areas, such as the workplace. In addition, this growth of English leads to the fact that international trade and commerce become a driver for the expansion of lingua franca nowadays as they did in the past. As is also asserted, whether in a hotel, in a multinational office, either on the local street commerce, English is the common currency in the worldwide without distinguishing the profession or circumstances of work (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Hence, English becomes the international language of the business world, turning then this language into somewhat necessary for communication.

As a result of this development of English as the language for communication in the Catalan business, research has been carried out in the course of these recent years. Orrit (2016) conducted a study about the use of English in the workplace of international enterprises between Catalan workers with the purpose to achieve an idea of how English was used. Looking at the results, Orrit’s study states that employees utilise written communication in a greater manner than the oral one despite that oral communication is also of massive importance in the Catalan business background. Moreover, it is exposed that in most of the situations, specifically in the 74% of them, this use of English for communication is done with non-native speakers of English. Additionally, thanks to the surveys fulfilled, Orrit could claim that the different co-workers who participated in the study think that they have a low proficiency in

pronunciation and vocabulary despite that English is considered for all of them as the essential international language of their company. With these reports, the author gives a notion of English paper in a specific area of the Catalan workplace, in this case international business.

Other studies have been carried out about Catalan workplace use of ELF as the one by Larsen (2018) in which the topic is not focused on a specific profession or corporation. In this analysis, Larsen determines to examine the English language use and needs in the Catalan workplace through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Focusing on the findings, it can be said that 74.1% of the participants admit that they use English at their job, and declare that reading and writing are the most used skills for them, showing similarity with Orrit's study. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that the survey respondents applied their knowledge of English at work mostly, when they need to read emails, websites or labels, focusing again on the importance of reading rather than other skills. When dealing with the perception of their level of English and the areas that they think need to improve, most of them consider that speaking is a weakness for them that they wanted to upgrade and that this could be achieved through a longer access to English lessons in which the language was taught for Lingua Franca purposes, in a realistic and specific way. Equally important, an idea that practically every participant shared, precisely 85.2%, is that English is a fundamental language and the most important for the Catalan workplace.

However, on the whole, limited research has been carried out, henceforth, it is difficult to arrive at a conclusive outcome about the topic dealt.

2.3.3. CLIL in Catalan education of English

With the purpose to ensure that students acquire the language in a proper and functional manner, the Catalan education system makes the choice to orient the English language learning in a plurilingual way. As an illustration, CLIL methodology is, due to the expansion of ELF, applied in a different manner than the one used before, into the education system of Catalonia (Department of Education, The language model of the Catalan education system, 2018).

In line with the Council of Europe's Language in Education, the different languages dealt in the school environment, (despite the fact that they are first languages, second or foreign ones) are taught as subjects but also as languages used for communication thanks to the employment of CLIL techniques. In most of the situations, CLIL is introduced in the acquisition of a Foreign

Language (FL), in this case, English. Due to the reason that English is not commonly used in external contexts of the classroom and that school lessons are the unique moment in which learners practice English, leaving aside the world of internet and gaming, CLIL is established with the aim to develop language skills and communication techniques that could be useful for students' future (Department of Education, The language model of the Catalan education system, 2018, p. 33). The fact that CLIL has been established in Catalan education, contributed to study the language in a much more fruitful manner but in the hours of class settled before.

Following Dalton-Puffer's (2007, p. 3), the purposes of introducing CLIL into Catalan schools should be, in a general way: "Develop intercultural communication skills, prepare for internationalisation, provide opportunities to study content through different perspectives, access subject-specific target language terminology, improve overall target language competence, develop oral communication skills, diversify methods and forms of classroom practice and increase learner motivation." Hence, all these features, at least, need to be the educational objects of CLIL implementation into the acquisition of a foreign language as English is considered in the Catalan education.

3 THE STUDY

3.1. Context

This study is developed in Catalonia, one autonomous region located in Spain. It is necessary to say that Catalonia is a highly touristic area which has two official languages that are Spanish and Catalan but, due to its global essence, English also plays a key role in the Catalan society. Therefore, a great number of the population use English as a language for communication in their daily lives.

3.2. Participants

The questionnaire was finally answered by 70 unknown participants who answered a survey through Google Forms. The questionnaire was addressed to high school and university students as well as to workers of any sphere, therefore, all of the respondents met that requirement.

In relation to the characteristics of the participants, the first section of the questionnaire comprises two basic questions about the gender and age of each participant in order to acquire

an overall idea of the respondents' background. The answers show that an 84.2% of them are women whereas an 11.4% are men, and the 4.2% left decided to not specify their gender. Dealing with the average age, all of them are between 17-31 years old. More than 48% are 21 years old and a 28.6% are 22. The remaining percentage is divided among the other exposed ages being 23 and 27 respectively, the more common ages of the surveyed people. Then, it could be said that the majority of the participants can be considered adults.

3.3. Instrument

The instrument used in this study of ELF was an online questionnaire written with the aim to acquire data from the responses of the participants and relate it with the theory dealt in the review of the literature. It is necessary to say that several questions of the survey are adapted or directly extracted from two different sources. The one by Larsen (2018) which deals with ELF in the Catalan workplace and the English language use and needs in this business context. Moreover, the other source is the study made by Salirrosas (2020) that discuss bilingualism and code-switching that occurred in Hispanics who live in Long Island. Despite the fact that the main topic is not related to ELF, some of the questions were useful for the questionnaire used in this work and others were readjusted in order to be meaningful for it, thus, this other survey is also used to design the Google Forms employed in the current study. This questionnaire is made with the intention of obtaining the notion of Catalan students and workers about the paper of English in Catalonia, and with it, have information about the opinion and perception of ELF employment in the workplace and education.

In relation to the creation of the questions, most of them are compulsory despite the ones that are focused on a specific profile of participant and therefore, they cannot be answered by all of them. It is also important to say that in a great number of the questions, respondents need to justify their answers by giving their opinion or experience in an accurate way.

Dealing with the composition of the questionnaire, this survey is divided into 20 questions about ELF. In the first part of the questionnaire, the participants need to state their gender and age. Afterwards, the second part of the survey consists of three questions that deal with the current situation of participants in relation to their education and occupation. Later, participants need to express their relation and perception of English. And, subsequently, the last part of the survey comprises six questions that are related to their insight of English teaching in the Catalan education and their preferences when communicating in English.

Regarding the time used for the participants to fulfil the questionnaire, it can be said that approximately 10-15 minutes are necessary to answer all the questions properly.

3.4. Procedure

The method used in this study was an Online questionnaire designed with the purpose to collect data about an analysis of ELF in the Catalan education and workplace.

The whole survey was firstly written in English but, after taking into account a variety of factors, it was finally presented in Catalan with the purpose to create a questionnaire easier to answer for everyone despite their proficiency in English, therefore leaving aside differences in level that could affect their explanations.

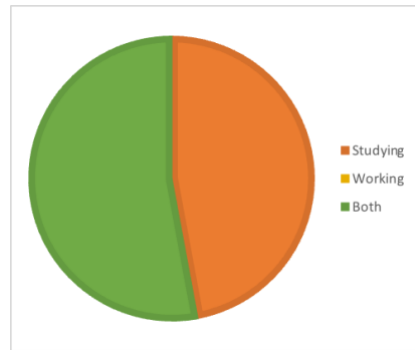
It is also important to say that any of the participants were aware about the purpose of this questionnaire. Even though, at the beginning of the Google Forms, a brief summary about the topic of the questionnaire appeared.

All the answers to the questions were portrayed in graphs and percentages through Excel. In relation to the open questions, the responses were analysed and, in the ones in which the number of answers is too large, grouped them depending on what they say in order to make the statistics and discussion of the survey easier. (See section 4)

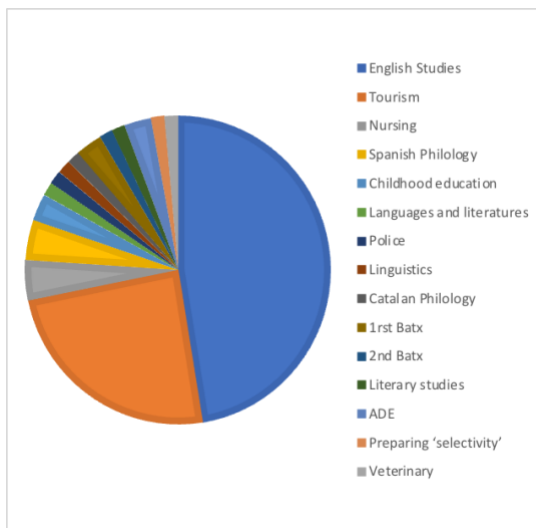
4 RESULTS

In the first question of the second part of the questionnaire in which the participants need to respond to their current situation, more than 47% of them answered that they are currently studying and almost 53% of them responded that they are both working and studying now (see figure 1). The majority of the people surveyed that are studying, are related to English studies (47.1%) and Tourism (24.2%) despite that, there is a wide variety of studies such as Nursing (4.29%), Spanish Philology (4.29%) or Childhood education (2.8%) among others (see figure 2) . Looking at the employment situation, almost 36% of the respondents are, at the present time, working as English teachers in language schools. Another common job in the participants is shop assistant (12.8%) or waiter (7.6%) but, there are also hotel receptionists (5.1%), workers in a restaurant (5.1%) amid other occupations (see figure 3).

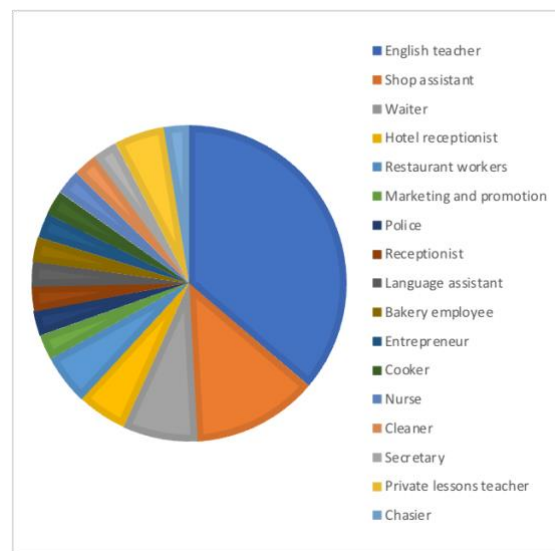
1. Current situation



2. Studies

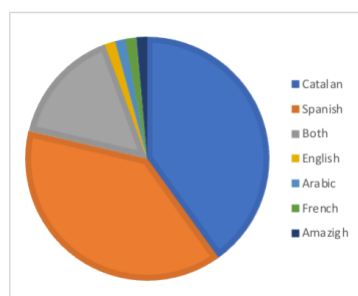


3. Occupations

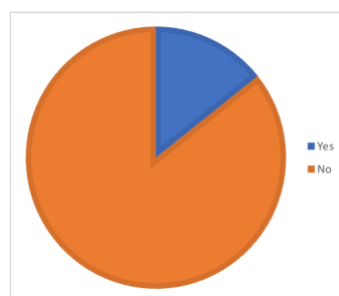


The answers to the questions on the participants' mother tongue and on the relation and perception that they have with English stated that most of the candidates speak with parents in Catalan (40%) and Spanish (38.5%), whereas 15.7% communicate in both languages and the rest use English, French, Amazigh and Arabic as their mother tongue (see figure 4). Afterwards, the next question asked if they have been living in an English speaking country. On it, only 14.3% of the respondents answered they stayed abroad for a prolonged time (see figure 5). A couple of them (20%) were in Brighton during 3 months, others in Ireland (20%/10%) during 6 and 10 months respectively, in Canada during a whole year (10%) and in Swindon for 4 months (10%). The rest of the participants that answered the question were studying abroad in non-speaking English countries such as Germany (10%) or Slovenia (10%) both during 6 months, but they were using English daily (see figure 6).

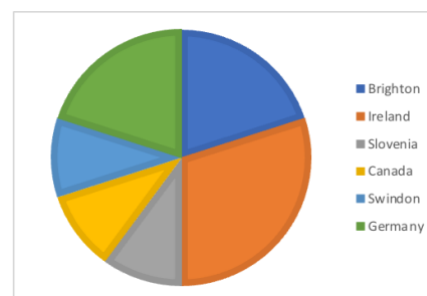
4. Mother tongue



5. Experience studying abroad

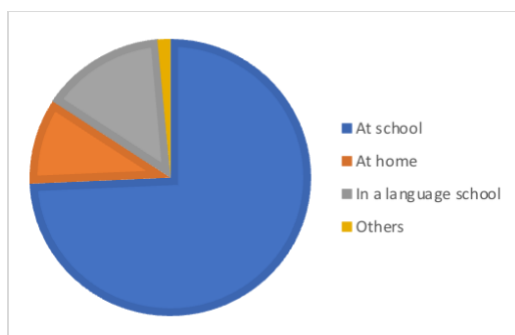


6. Country and period

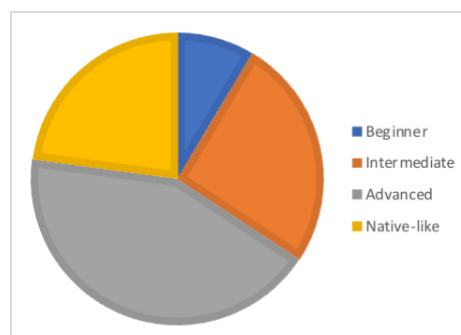


In the next part of the survey, the questions are related to English, their level, education and use in the participants' lives. In question 7, respondents need to answer where they started learning English and the answers expose that 74.3% of them began to learn it in the school, 14,3% of the participants started acquiring English in a language school and the other remaining percentage is divided into at home learning (10%) and nursery school (1.4%) (see figure 7). In relation to the perception of their level of English, the answers claimed that 42.9% of the respondents think that they have an advanced level whereas 25.7% consider their English level is an intermediate one and 22.9% maintain they have Native-like English. Then, the other 8.6% left think they are beginners in the language (see figure 8). Furthermore, question 9 deals with the situations in which English is used as the language for communication. On it, participants have very different answers, so there is a lot of variety. The most common answer was that they use English with colleagues and classmates (42.8%), following the other that was with friends (18.5%). Moreover, at work is another of the common answers for the participants (11.4%) or also the one that says during travel (5.7%) among others (see figure 9).

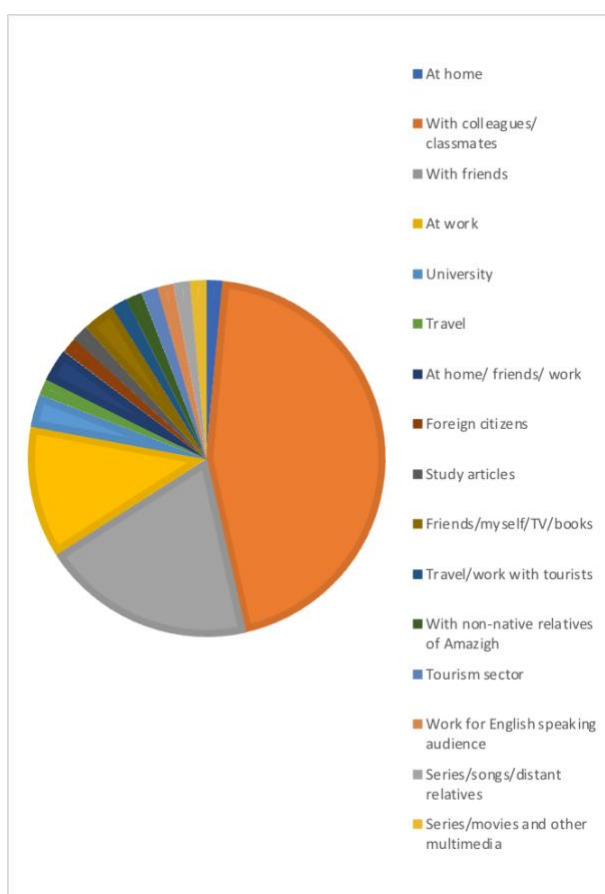
7. First contact with English



8. English level perception

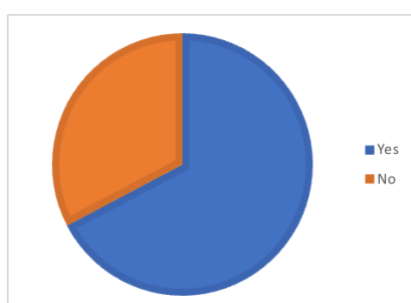


9. Situations in which English is used

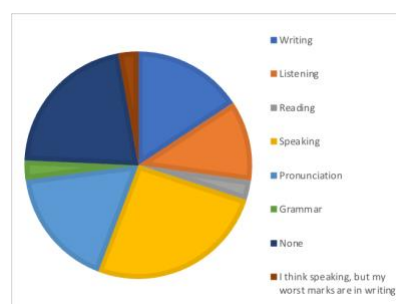


Dealing with question 10, more than 67% of the candidates declare that they use English as a language for communication in their job while the 32,7% answer that they do not use English to communicate with colleagues or customers (see figure 10). Talking about weaknesses in English, 25.7% of the participants think that their weakness has to do with speaking, 17.1% of them consider their problem is pronunciation and 15.7% conceive writing as their main weak point. The 21.4% of them are convinced that they do not have any weakness in English. The rest of the respondents think that their weaknesses are reading (2.8%), grammar (2.8%) or speaking despite their worst marks being related with writing (2.8%) (see figure 11).

10. Use of English at the workplace



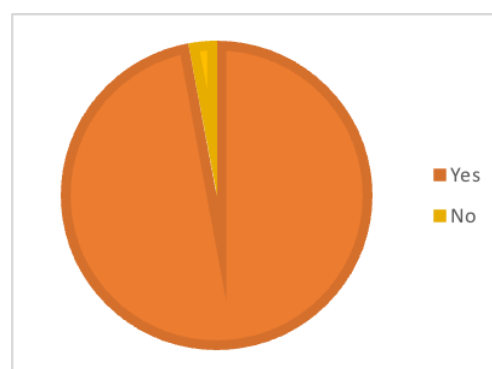
11. Main English weaknesses



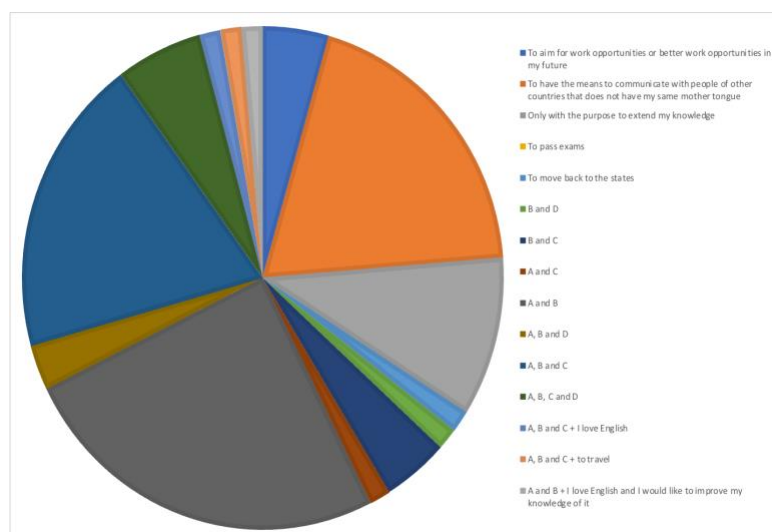
In relation to question 12 in which they are asked if they want to continue learning English, the answers are practically unanimous. More than 97% of the participants answered yes, whereas only 2.9% of them responded no (see figure 12). Those who answered affirmatively, expose in question 13 that they want to do it for different reasons. A group of them think they want to do it with the aim to achieve work opportunities or better work opportunities in their future (4.4%). Others (19.2%) want to follow with English to have the means to communicate with people of other countries that do not have the same mother tongue. The 25% of the respondents answered both options above- mentioned as their main reasons. More than 10% think they want to do it with the unique purpose to extend their knowledge. A 4.4% of them consider that they decided to do it not only with the purpose to be able to communicate but also to broaden their learning. The 19.2% of the participants continue with English for the three reasons stated above, the one related with job opportunities, communication with other people around the world and to extend their knowledge. Furthermore, 5.8% of them also think that these options are motives to follow with the language but also the option to pass exams. Other answers similar to those stated before are expressed in figure 13.

In contrast, the ones who responded negatively, think they do not want to continue learning English because it is too difficult for them (50%) and the other half because they consider that they have a high level so they do not need more and because they do not require it for their daily lives (see figure 14).

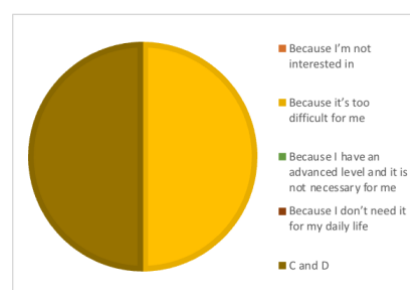
12. Do you want to continue learning English?



13. Reasons to continue with English



14. Reasons to stop learning English

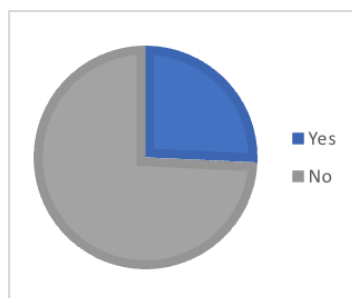


Looking at the answers to the 15th question on their opinion about the opportunities they had to practice English in class, it is shown that 25.7% of the candidates feel they had opportunities to train English speaking at school for different reasons. The most answered question (27.7%) was that classes and classroom communication were always in English. Another common response was that there are opportunities because the classes were interactive (series, movies and tasks) and fluid thanks to the teacher (22.2%). Moreover, others said that they could practice English but despite that, more speaking practice and more hours are needed (16.6%), or that they practice English daily due to the fact that they currently do most of the classes in English (11.1%). In like manner, 5.5% of the participants responded that they had opportunities to do it but only at the language school or university. The other missing percentage (16.6%) do not justify their answers (see figures 15 and 16).

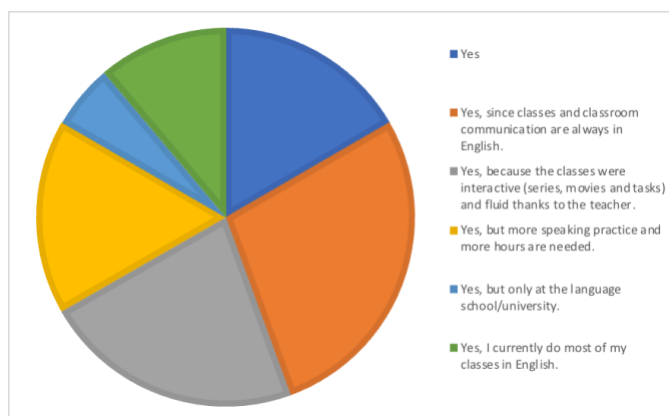
Contrastly, the majority of participants (74.2%) said they do not have these opportunities during school. A great number of them (36.5%) say that they only practice listening, writing, reading and grammar, centring only in theory and leaving aside the speaking part. Others (23%) consider that it is necessary to do the class with a smaller ratio of students and carry out more hours of English because the current ones are insufficient. Another general answer (19.2%) was that this is because the level is too low during school, “ESO” and “Batxillerat” and that there comes a point when it is always the same because only the necessary activities are carried

out. The 9.6% of the respondents show that the problem has to do with the system used and with the fact that they do not practice with real-life situations. Furthermore, 5.7% of the candidates think that school offers enough opportunities but students do not use it at all because they end up speaking in Catalan. The 3.8% think they only practice English in external institutions and the rest of the participants (1.9%) claim that the real problem is that there is a huge difference in level between students and, then, it is difficult to cover all levels (see figure 15 and 17).

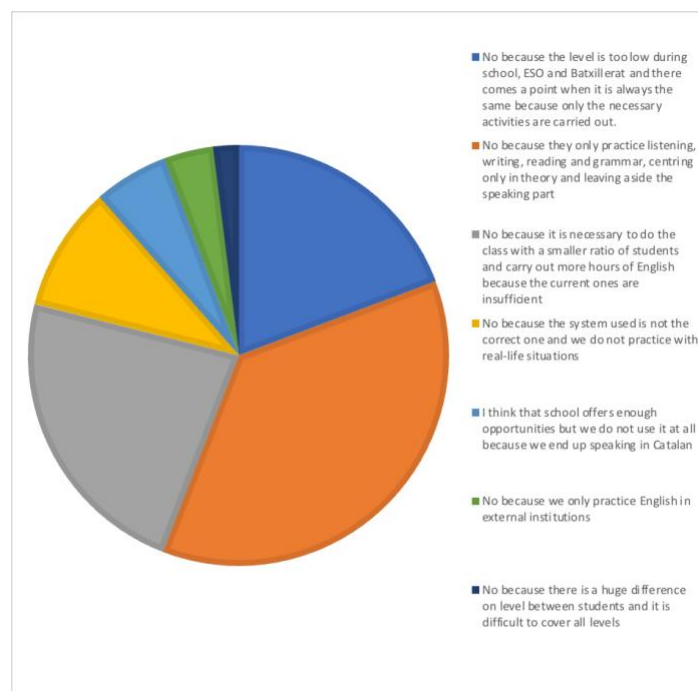
15. Do you think you had opportunities to practice English in class?



16. Opinions on the opportunities to practice English in class

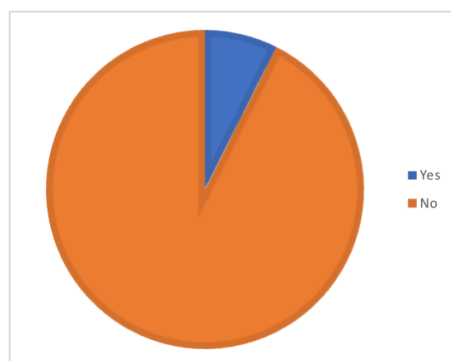


17. Opinions on the opportunities to practice English in class

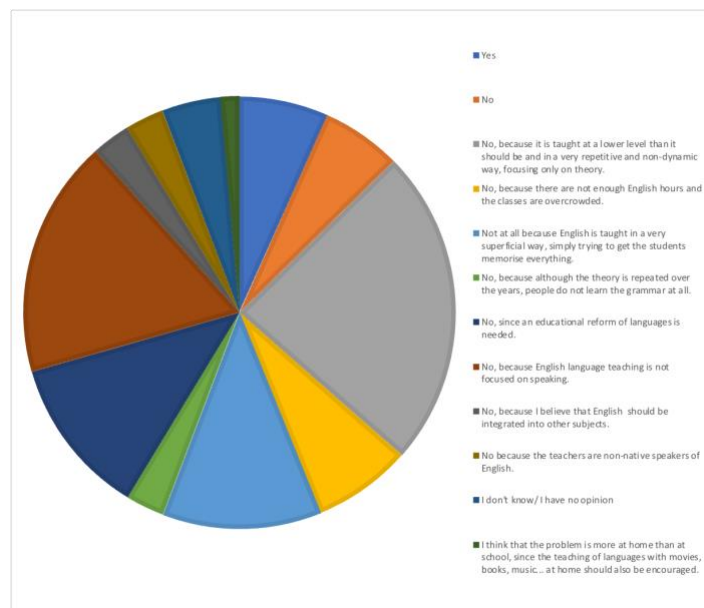


Dealing with question 16, the respondents need to say if they think that English is taught effectively in the Catalan education or not. Most of them, specifically 88.5%, think that English is not taught efficiently for different reasons in contrast with the 7.1% of the participants that answered affirmatively the question (see figure 18). More than 25% of the ones who answered the question in a negative way, think that this is not true because English it is taught at a lower level than it should be and in a very repetitive and non-dynamic way, focusing only on theory. The 19% of the candidates think that it is because English language teaching is not focused on speaking. Others (12.7%) consider that the reason is that English is taught in a very superficial way, simply trying to get the students to memorise everything. In like manner, another 12.7% of the participants believe that an educational reform of languages is needed. Moreover, 7.9% of the candidates see that the real problem has to do with the fact that there are not enough English hours and that the classes are overcrowded. A 3.1% think it is not efficient because although the theory is repeated over the years, people do not learn the grammar at all. Another 3.1% are convinced that English should be integrated into other subjects amid other answers options that are expressed in figure 19.

18. Is English taught effectively. at school?



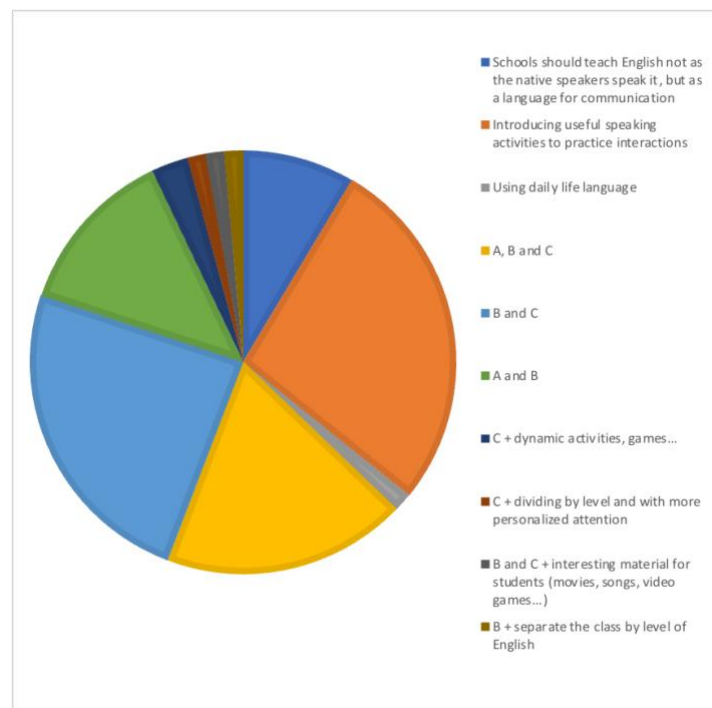
19. Opinions on the effectiveness of. English teaching



The answers to question 17 on the participants' thoughts about the improvement of English classes at school stated that 27.1% of them consider that schools should introduce useful speaking activities to practice interactions. More than 12% of them contemplate including the

speaking activities but also the teaching of English as a language for communication. A 24.2% of the respondents think that they should introduce these activities but also use daily life language in class. Moreover, 18.5% of them think that all the options stated above will be good so that they will introduce the three of them. The rest of the candidates think that they would include dynamic activities and games (2.8%) or divide the group by levels (1.4%) among other options (see figure 20).

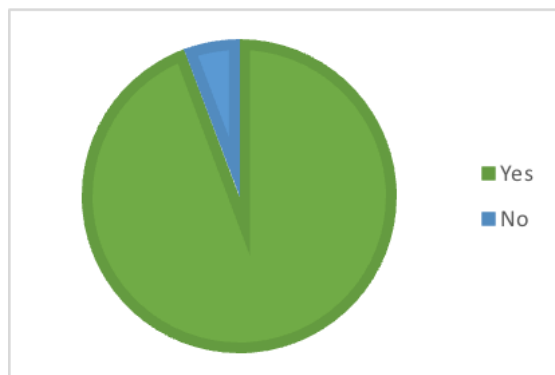
20. Thoughts about the improvement of English teaching



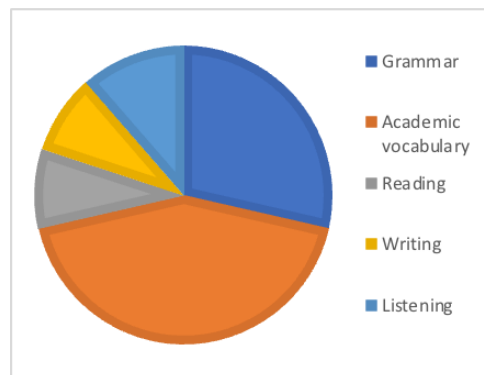
Talking about question 18, the respondents should answer if they would like to take more English lessons with the purpose to acquire communicative skills proficiency and therefore, being more comfortable when having a conversation and the answers were very similar due to the fact that more than 94% of the participants responded yes, and the 5.7% remaining said no (see figure 21).

In question 19, the participants need to say which of the areas dealt in school would be less profitable for their future English use. On it, more than 42% of the candidates answered that they think the area was Academic vocabulary. The next option most answered was Grammar with 28.6% of the responses. Others (11.4%) answered that Listening would be the less profitable area for them. And the rest think that this area would be Reading (8.6%) and Writing (8.6%) (see figure 22).

21. Possibility of taking more English lessons

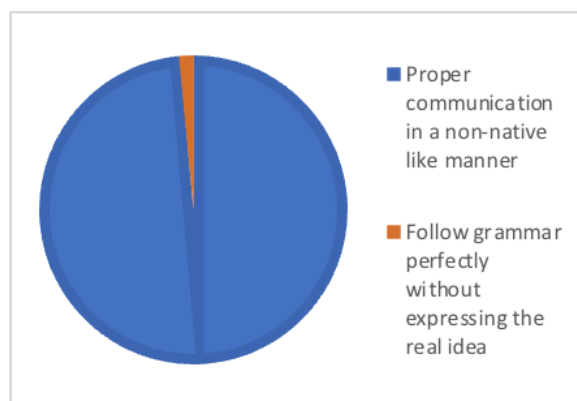


22. Less profitable English areas



Taking a look at the last question of the survey in which the respondents need to answer what is more important for them when conversing with someone in English, it can be seen that the answer is almost unanimous. 98.6% of the participants prefer to acquire a proper communication in a non-native like manner, whereas only 1.4% opt for following grammar perfectly without expressing the real idea (see figure 23).

23. Preferences when conversing



5 DISCUSSION

An important topic dealt with in the production of this work was the place of English in Catalonia, and subsequently, also of ELF. As the findings of the Review of the Literature section displayed, Catalonia has two official languages that are Catalan and Spanish, but despite English is not being an official language, it also has an important role in the region as the Survey on Language Uses of the Population (2018) claims. Thus, the Catalan society could be considered a multilingual one. This fact can be corroborated by the results on questions 4

and 8 which expressed that the majority of the participants' mother tongues are Catalan and Spanish but they also have an advanced or native-like level of English. Moreover, looking at this current role of English in Catalonia, as is stated in the Place of English in Catalonia subsection, this increase of the language is not only because of the English use in the cultural and business areas but also due to the fact that it takes great importance in the region's education. Most of the survey's candidates started learning English at school and they are still using it at university classes as answers to questions 7 and 9 exposed. Furthermore, the ones that are English is a requirement to finish the University grade.

As regards ELF in the Catalan workplace, focusing on question 10 and relating it also with question 3 about the participants' jobs occupations, it is revealed that a large number of the respondents use English as a language for communication in their job despite their field of work. Therefore, as Rogerson-Revell (2007) claims, English is the common currency in the worldwide without distinguishing the profession or circumstances of work. This leads to the fact that English not only could be considered the foreign language most spoken in the region but also a language that is adopted as a Lingua Franca in the workplace of Catalonia. Due to this important paper of English, as reported by Idescat (under the General Directorate for Language Policy, Linguistic uses of the population survey, 2018), the workers that are considered competent and with a proficiency in English have more possibilities to acquire employment opportunities. Therefore, it can be said that the level of proficiency in English is correlated with the possibility to acquire a job in the region. This fact is also expressed in the results collected in questions 13 and 14 in which a larger part of the participants exposed that they decided to continue learning English to extend their knowledge, to have the means to communicate with other people as well as to aim for work opportunities in their future.

Furthermore, examining the answers to question 11 about the weaknesses perception of the participants when using English in the workplace together with other contexts such as the educational environment, one of the most common answers displayed that speaking is considered as their main feebleness coinciding with Larsen's (2018) study conclusions even though the participants' contexts were highly distinct. This proves that, although CLIL is established in the Catalan schools with the purpose to develop language skills and communication techniques that could be practical for students' future, the way in which speaking is practiced at school is inadequate (Department of Education, The language model of the Catalan education system, 2018, p. 33). Dealing with that, this problem with speaking

would be possibly solved if ELF was introduced properly during the learning of the language due to the fact that ELF would help English learners to acquire efficiency during interactions with other non-native speakers of the language.

Besides the analysis about the place of English in Catalonia and the importance of ELF in the Catalan workplace is also crucial to study the paper of ELF in education. That is to say that the expansion of English in Catalonia also has to do with the importance that this language acquires in the education of the region. Despite the relevant paper that this language has, following the results to question 15, a great part of the respondents claimed they did not have enough opportunities to practice English at school. This factor forces them to practice this language in other institutions such as language schools. This can be corroborated only looking at the Indicators and Statistics service of the Education Department made in the course of 2019-2020 in which it can be seen that a great number of students have been registered in English courses and therefore, with it, confirming the words of Reichelt (2006, p. 7), "Students in these and other areas typically have little or no English language instruction available to them other than what they seek out through private schools or individual tutoring". Moreover, in question 16 the majority of the participants stated that English is not taught effectively at school because, among other things, English is not taught for specific areas thus, declining the option to become competent and comfortable using ELF in their future career. This would be solved with the application of ELF that, as Tatsioka et al. (2018, p. 21) claim, it builds up and improves a repertoire of strategies that would help all these learners to bypass problems of communication with other non-native users of English.

The fact that English is considered a language not well taught at school is due to the reason that English is not commonly presented as a Lingua Franca in Catalan schools as it can be expressed in The language model of the Catalan education system (2018). Certainly, English is not taught for specific purposes in the Catalan schools, because, as a matter of fact, English is commonly instructed in a formal setting and with a highlight in form, grammar and vocabulary as is stated by Firth (2009). Notwithstanding that, according to the answers obtained in question 17, learners would like to improve English classes through the introduction of various characteristics which ELF teaching includes. They also express this idea throughout the results obtained in questions 18 in which the respondents claimed they would like to take more English lessons with the purpose to acquire proficiency in communicative skills and be more comfortable having a conversation, thus making use of ELF

at school. Additionally, in question 19, the participants exposed several areas treated at school they think are not profitable for their future, exposing that the formal setting of instruction used at the Catalan schools is not practical at all.

By the same token, the matter of instituting ELF in the language instruction of English has to start with the teachers and the activities dealt with in class considering the fundamental skills for learners to communicate adequately with others. Hence, centering the learning of English in the necessity of cross-cultural comprehension instead of in the capacity to acquire the whole norms of the language. Associating this with the responses gathered in question 20, it can be said that most of the participants prefer to learn English as a Lingua Franca instead of acquiring English following grammar perfectly without expressing the real idea.

6 CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, this study is concerned with the role of English as a Lingua Franca in the educational and business fields. The location chosen to examine this topic was Catalonia due to the fact that it is a region in which English has an important position because of the worldwide globalisation and the relevance of tourism in the area. With this in mind, the review of the literature deals with the definitions and features of ELF or issues related with it and the importance that this language has as a language for communication in the Catalan education and workplace as a consequence of the circumstances mentioned above. With the purpose to acquire more information and real data about the topic chosen, an online survey has been made to a group of 70 unknown Catalan students and workers which use English with the aim to communicate with others in their daily lives.

Analysing the results of the questionnaire, it could be assumed that English, especially ELF, is really important in the fields of education and the workplace. In fact, as it can be expressed in the whole study, ELF has a great and favourable impact on both Catalan areas. In relation to the education in the region, it has to be said that, even though English has an essential paper in the area, it is not commonly taught as a Lingua Franca due to the methodologies chosen by the teachers and this fact could affect the way in which the language is used by the students and the effectiveness that their conversations could have. Dealing with the Catalan business, ELF has been turned into an efficient tool for communication between employees of any field as it is stated in the questionnaire results. Despite that, it is displayed that a large number of these

Catalan workers are influenced during the interactions in the language by the limited use of English as a Lingua Franca during their education and language learning.

Therefore, taking everything into account, this study demonstrates the significance that ELF has in the Catalan society and the necessity to include the language properly in the educational system in order to help citizens to acquire a successful communication in English despite the situation and context.

All things considered, that is to say that, more in depth research about the role that ELF has in the world of the Catalan education and workplace need to be made with the purpose to achieve more consistent results and take greater conclusions.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire

(Only the English version is inserted)

Gender

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Prefer not to specify

Age: _____ years old

1. Are you currently studying or working?

- a. Studying
- b. Working
- c. Both

2. If you are currently studying, what is your course/university degree?

3. If you are currently working, what is your job position?

4. In which language do you communicate with your parents?

- a. Catalan
- b. Spanish
- c. English
- d. Other (Specify which) _____

5. Have you ever been living abroad during an extended time in an English-speaking country?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. If you answered yes on the question above, specify the place and for how long.

7. Where did you start learning English?

- a. At school
- b. At home
- c. In a language academy
- d. Others (Specify where) _____

8. Which level do you think that you have in English?

- a. Beginner
- b. Intermediate
- c. Advanced
- d. Native-like

9. In which circumstances do you use English to a greater extent?

- a. At home
- b. With colleagues/ classmates
- c. With friends
- d. Others

10. Do you use English as a language for communication in work? (if you are working)

- a. Yes
- b. No

11. When you practice English, do you think your main weakness is...?

- a. Writing
- b. Listening
- c. Reading
- d. Speaking
- e. Pronunciation
- f. Others _____
- g. None

12. Do you want to continue learning English?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13. Why do you think that it is important for you to keep studying this language? (Answer only if you said yes to the question above)

- a. To aim for work opportunities or better work opportunities in my future
- b. To have the means to communicate with people of other countries that does not have my same mother tongue
- c. Only with the purpose to extend my knowledge
- d. To pass exams
- e. Others

14. Why don't you want to continue learning English? (Answer only if you said no to the question 13)

- a. Because I'm not interested in
- b. Because it is too difficult for me
- c. Because I have an advanced level and it is not necessary for me
- d. Because I don't need it for my daily life
- e. Others

15. Do you think you had enough opportunities to practice your English in class? Please justify your answer by giving your reasons based on your experience during school.

- a. Yes. _____
- b. No. _____

16. Do you think English is taught effectively in Catalan education? (If not, justify your answer briefly)

- a. Yes
- b. No. _____

17. In which way would you improve English classes at school?

- a. Schools should teach English not as the native speakers speak it, but as a language for communication
- b. Introducing useful speaking activities to practice interactions

- c. Using daily life language
- d. Other

18. If you had the opportunity, would you like to take more English lessons with the aim to acquire proficiency in communicative skills and be more comfortable when having a conversation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

19. Which of these areas you have seen as less profitable for your future English use?

- a. Grammar
- b. Academic vocabulary
- c. Reading
- d. Writing
- e. Listening

20. What do you think is more important when conversing with someone in English: acquire proper communication in a non-native like manner or follow grammar perfectly without expressing the real idea?

- a. Proper communication in a non-native like manner
- b. Follow grammar perfectly without expressing the real idea